

**From:** johno@MIT.EDU@inetgw  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
**Date:** 1/17/02 3:26pm  
**Subject:** Microsoft Settlement

Dear Justice Department,

I want to commend you on successfully convicting Microsoft for its antitrust violations and documenting its many anticompetitive business practices over the years.

Further, I urge you to consider harsher punishments for Microsoft than are contained in the currently proposed settlement. The settlement rightly protects the rights of computer retailers to include competing browsers, icons, applications, and operating systems pre-installed in their products. However, it does not do enough to protect end users and competing operating systems. I recommend that Microsoft be required to publish openly the file formats for its Word, Excel, and PowerPoint applications, which are so frequently included as email attachments that the inability of competing products to view them properly helps protect Microsoft's Windows and Office monopolies.

MIT's Unix-based campus network development has given the world valuable technologies such as the X window system and Kerberos authentication. Yet we at MIT, like the rest of the world, cannot read and write publicly traded documents in the ubiquitous .DOC, .XLS, and .PPT formats without purchasing both Windows and Office from Microsoft, for a cost of \$600 per machine, plus the cost of upgrading hardware for the high memory requirements of Windows XP. Forcing these file formats to be published openly would allow real competition in the lucrative office software market, which in turn would bolster competition in the desktop operating system market.

The recent decisions by Microsoft to exclude Apple's Quicktime movie player and Sun's Java runtime environment in its new XP operating system show that the company still values eliminating competitive threats far above consumer choice and convenience. The settlement you choose must not therefore rely on the goodwill of Microsoft or the belief that they will follow the spirit of the remedy rather than merely the letter. Any loopholes you leave them will surely be exploited.

You are currently in the valuable and hard-won position of having found this monopolist guilty of literally hundreds of anticompetitive acts. We as a nation and marketplace have a rare chance now to put an end to it. I urge you to make the proposed settlement harsher toward Microsoft, not just preventing future practices but also penalizing them for their past acts that have left lasting damage to the industry. Most importantly, I urge you to require open publication of the proprietary file formats Microsoft still uses to maintain their operating system and

office software monopolies.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

John Obenauer

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